THE LADDER

JUNE
1960

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purpose of the

Daughters of BILITIS

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

1. Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications---this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.

2. Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.

3. Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.

4. Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

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the Ladder

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THE LADDER is regarded as a sounding board for various points of view on the homophile and related subjects and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the organization.

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Au Revoir

THERE ARE TWO REASONS FOR WRITING THIS EDITORIAL, AND THE FIRST IS TO POINT WITH PARDONABLE PRIDE TO THE SPLENDID TRIUMPH OF DOB'S FIRST NATIONAL CONVENTION.

I THINK THAT I MAY SAY WITHOUT FEAR OF CONTRADICTION THAT THIS WAS THE BEST CONVENTION YET HELD BY A HOMOPHILE ORGANIZATION, AND BY FAR THE BEST ATTENDED. THIS ISSUE OF THE LADDER CONTAINS BRIEF COMMENTS ON THE PROGRAM. THE ENTIRE PROCEEDINGS WILL BE COVERED THOROUGHLY IN THE JULY ISSUE.

MY SECOND REASON IS TO BID ADIEU AS EDITOR OF THE LADDER. I HAVE HELD THIS POSITION SINCE THE BEGINNING - SINCE THE FIRST 12-PAGE MIMEOGRAPHED "NEWSLETTER" WAS MAILED OUT IN OCTOBER OF 1956. THE MAGAZINE HAS GROWN TREMENDOUSLY SINCE THAT TIME, BUT THERE IS STILL MUCH ROOM FOR EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT.

I BELIEVE THAT FOUR YEARS OF A ONE-WOMAN EDITORSHIP IS ENOUGH. NEW IDEAS AND A FRESH SLANT ON THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED ARE NECESSARY IF THE LADDER IS TO CONTINUE TO BE WHAT WE WISH IT TO BE.

MY SUCCESSOR, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNING BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS, INC., AT THE CONVENTION, IS MOST CERTAINLY WELL QUALIFIED TO MEET THE CHALLENGE.

NOT ONLY DOES SHE HAVE A JOURNALISTIC BACKGROUND, BUT ALSO A DOB BACKGROUND AS ONE OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP. BUT MORE IMPORTANT, SHE HAS THE UNQUALIFIED ENTHUSIASM NEEDED FOR A JOB WHICH MORE OFTEN THAN NOT DEVOLVES INTO THE SHEER DRUDGERY OF PROOFREADING, TYPING STENCILS, ETC., RATHER THAN JUST SITTING AT A DESK AND "EDITING".

THE GOVERNING BOARD CHOSE WISELY, AND YOUR NEW EDITOR IS A WOMAN WITH THE COMBINED ATTRIBUTES OF CREATIVENESS, BUSINESS SENSE, WARMTH OF FEELING TOWARD HUMAN PROBLEMS AND FRAILTIES, HUMOR AND JUST ALL-ROUND COMPETENCE - DEL MARTIN.

I HAVE LOVED THE JOB AND WILL MISS IT, BUT I LEAVE THE LADDER IN VERY GOOD HANDS.

- PHYLLIS LYON

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

I -- IMPRESSIONS BY STEN RUSSELL

The 1st National Convention of the Daughters of Bilitis had the most exciting program given to date on the problems of the homophile. Having said this with all just pride, it is well to note however, that without the work done by ONE, Inc. and the Mattachine Society on many previous conventions ours could not have been possible... or compared.

The courage shown by the national leaders of the DOB and the San Francisco chapter who carefully planned and executed this fine program is greatly to be commended. The Los Angeles chapter will find itself hard pressed to equal their performance when they host the 1962 Convention. The problem of fear and insecurity in the homophile minority is a grave one. Each succeeding convention by ONE, Inc. and the Mattachine has given us all new strength and new hope. Former convention planners have not dared to invite speakers who held violently adverse opinions to our position. The most negative speakers ever invited consisted of those psychologists and psychiatrists who considered homosexuality an illness, or a symptom of an illness to be treated, not a crime to be punished.

This convention featured an Episcopalian chaplain, Rev. Fordyce Eastburn, who informed us that homosexuality was a "primary disorder of the divine plan", and a fierce debate between Atty. Morris Lowenthal and Atty. Sidney Feinberg, Northern Coastal Area Administrator of the California Alcoholic Beverage Control Department, raged on the "Gay Bar Problem".

While the theme was "A Look at the Lesbian," much of the program was devoted to matters concerning male homosexuals also. It was disappointing to me that in a program crammed with professional people concerned about the problem of the homophile, civil liberties, gay bars, religion, and the special legal problems of Lesbian couples, the

San Francisco press saw fit only to cover the "Gay Bar Problem". However, considering the fact that it was the first coverage in California of any convention dedicated to exploring this emotionally charged subject, one could say that much progress has been made. The reporters of both the "Chronicle" and "Examiner" were quite fair and did not slant their writing either for or against the homosexual minority represented at a gathering of over 125 people interested in such matters. (I am not counting the "San Francisco Examiner" heading: "Half of S.F. Sex Deviate Bars Face License Loss" ! ! ! !)

The next issue of THE LADDER will contain my report on the entire convention...a great and wonderful experience for all concerned!

II -- IMPRESSIONS BY HELEN SANDERS

Probably the casual on-looker would not have known just what sort of convention this was. We don't mind.

There was the usual pre-convention hysteria Friday night when over 100 people crowded into a small space to bid each other "hello" and "howdjado". It seemed that we covered conversation from "Am I really here," to "Zealous realism". Discussion has never been a problem with the DOB.

Saturday was a day to remember. We started out with the usual panel...the pat on the head...the understanding... the back-up by professionals. So, another homophile convention was under way in the usual manner. Then lunchtime came. An Episcopal minister served up our dessert with damnation. We managed to recover during a pleasant interlude with an ACLU speaker, only to be shocked again in the mid-afternoon session by an exchange between opposing ideologies that made headlines in the local press. It was "Gay Bar and the Law". The speakers were admirable in their vehemence. The audience rumbled but had the good sense not to erupt. What could have been violent was constructive. The Alcoholic Beverage Commission had its say and

(Continued on page 25)

The Experiment that Failed

The following article came to us from England as told to Joy O. I. Spoczynska by Georgina Lloyd. We print it close on the heels of "The House on the Borderland", which appeared in last month's LADDER, because of the many women who are in the situation described in both pieces, and because of the general climate of intolerance existing among Lesbians toward women who are married yet admit their Lesbian tendencies. - Ed.

* * *

At nearly thirty-two years of age, married ten years, with two children, most of the people who know me think my husband and I to be an ideally happy married couple; but they are all wrong. To the outside world I am a wife and mother - a woman. But in reality I am none of these things. Physically I am capable of motherhood, yes. My two children prove it. That proves me to be physically a woman, and a wife, too. But I belong to the twilight world - the world of the 'third sex', neither normal woman or normal man - a world unexplored like a little-known, far-off planet hanging in the darkness of space.

I was born in a smallish industrial Midland town in the summer of 1922, the first child of the family. My father, a bank cashier, was more disposed to welcome the arrival of a daughter than my mother, who had wanted a boy. She had already chosen the name George, and, bitterly disappointed when her hopes were not realised, she called me Georgina.

I had the normal family upbringing of the ordinary middle-class child, attending intermediate school and gaining my entrance scholarship to secondary school in due course,

from whence I graduated to a private high school, where I took my Oxford school certificate examinations, passing with honours in French and Latin and distinction in English. Previously to this I had toyed with the idea of taking up teaching as a career, but later decided that a job in which I could use my flair for language would suit me better.

It was about this time - at fifteen years of age - that I became vaguely aware that I had not the same interests and feelings as other girls. I had always been a tomboy; climbing trees had been not the least of my accomplishments. But this phase is common to many pre-adolescent girls, and no one took much notice, or attached any significance to it. But whereas normal girls after puberty became more feminine, losing their tomboyish traits and becoming hair- and face-conscious and interested in pretty clothes, these things left me cold. So long as my face was clean, I could not care less about the merits of So-and-so's cold cream or such-and-such a powder. My long plaits irked me, and I asked my mother every day to let me have them cut off. When she took me to a shop for a new coat or costume, she would comment on the fact that I always chose the plainest styles and materials. As for the handbags, dainty undies, and silk stockings that other girls saved their pocket-money to buy, I did not care two hoots about such things. My hobbies were nature study, swimming, cycling, and reading adventure and travel books and the boys' classics. I belonged to two swimming clubs and swam and dived well, winning several certificates and medals, mostly for speed strokes, diving and underwater swimming.

My puberty had been uneventful and I had developed normally physically, though somewhat earlier than the average age. But by the time I was fifteen - at the same time as I acquired this strange mental awareness that I was not as other girls - I found that my voice was becoming deeper, although it did not actually 'break' like a boy's. I was a member of our church choir, and endured much good-natured twitting from the choirmaster and the other members of the choir, and even the Vicar, who called me 'the girl tenor'. I was unable to sing with the sopranos, and was given the choice of either singing

soprano parts an octave lower, or joining in the tenor parts. I chose the latter. As my voice ranged from B flat above middle C down to A below C below middle C, I found no difficulty in doing this.

I soon realized that my walk, too, was not like that of other girls. I walked with long, swinging strides, and preferred my flat-heeled brogues to the high-heeled court shoes which other girls craved.

But most of all I was aware of my complete lack of enthusiasm about the opposite sex. My friends' tales of the manly traits, the good looks or the accomplishments of the various boys of their acquaintance fell upon indifferent ears, and I could not understand their despondency at the failure of some particular young fellow to show any interest in them, nor was there any answering echo in my heart when fierce competition raged about the eligibility of various young men as dancing partners.

One day, when I was sixteen, I attended a dance and social held by our Church, and while other girls were anxiously wondering which boys would single them out, I was equally anxiously hoping that no boy would ask me to dance.

I went and sat beside a girl who seemed to be rather a wallflower. The boys did not seem to be bothering her much. I don't know why, because I thought her quite attractive. A few years older than myself, she was quiet and reserved, with dark hair and blue eyes. When she asked me to dance with her, I agreed.

As I piloted her around the floor, I had a strange sensation of "fitting in" as though playing a role for which I was destined. She allowed me to lead naturally and when I led her back to the chairs at the side of the hall, I had an odd feeling of deep content.

I danced with the girl all evening. Nobody paid any attention to us, and my mother, who was drinking tea and talking to the ladies of the church committee, once remarked as we passed that we seemed to be enjoying ourselves. No doubt she was secretly pleased that her daugh-

ter, unlike many of my contemporaries, was not the sort to throw herself at the boys and try to attract their attention. But whatever she thought of my monopolising Pauline's evening, I never knew.

As I lay awake that night I wondered why I seemed to be so different from other girls. My walk, my voice, my natural leading as though I were the male partner in the dance, my complete indifference to feminine vanities - somehow I found it all strangely disturbing. ...

A year passed, and found me completing my studies, learning shorthand and typewriting, and looking out for a secretarial post with languages.

One evening I had gone to the library, and there was a new assistant librarian - I will call her Jean. Thirty-two, petite and dark, she had vivacious grey eyes and a voice that was all sympathy and womanliness. As I looked at her I felt myself curiously drawn to her, and when a few moments later I was choosing my books from the shelves and turned round suddenly twice, on each occasion she was looking at me, turning away with a flush as our gaze met.

As I handed my books to her for stamping, I plucked up courage. "Are you new at this branch?" I asked. "I don't think I've seen you here before."

"Yes," she answered. "I've been transferred from the -- street branch. Do you often come in?"

"Yes, I'm an avid reader, as you can see from all these extra non-fiction tickets. I change my books - or rather, renew them - regularly."

As I left the library I was conscious of her eyes watching me as I wheeled my bicycle from the porch.

The same day a week later saw me back at the library. "I knew you would come," she said.

"But it is not really time to renew my books," I stammered.

"I knew you would be coming in, all the same," she said.

"By the way, I see you have a bike. I am a great cyclist - I go out into the country on my bike most week-ends. What about joining me on Saturday? We could picnic in the woods, and there is so much we could talk about, both of us being so fond of books."

That Saturday on our bicycles was but the first of many. We would cycle out into the surrounding countryside most week-ends - summer and winter alike. In summer we would take picnic meals, while in winter we would build a fire and cook our own meals, camp-fashion, in the more isolated parts of the woods.

Our intimacy grew. There were the long, carefree days in the woods and fields, drawn together by a common love of Nature, good reading, and cycling. We would go swimming together, and in the dark winter evenings we would go to the cinema and to lectures and the theatre. Hands would touch in the darkness and fingers clasp, and there would be utter content as I would sit with her head resting on my shoulder.

When I went away for our annual holiday with my parents and brothers, the parting kiss of friendship would be followed by the letters full of news and shot through with a deep under-current of affection.

One day we were in the woods, our cycles propped against a tree. It was high summer, and I was nineteen. As we sat together under a shady oak, Jean suddenly leaned forward and kissed me, pressing against me with all the urgency of pent-up love.

In one blinding flash of realisation I knew that this was something that belongs to one sex with another. As I found the ecstasy of fulfillment and understanding with Jean, I knew that this must be the feeling which normally existed between girl and boy.

Jean and I had never discussed the implications of our friendship; our relationship had developed as naturally and inevitably as normal boy-and-girl friendship develops into love. But I knew that I was different from other girls, with my masculine feelings for Jean, my

walk, my voice, all the other preferences and peculiarities which set me apart. How far Jean's psychological make-up fitted into my scheme of things, I did not know. She was a feminine type of woman, a complete contrast to myself. It was not until many years later that I learned that there are feminine as well as masculine types of female inverts.

When I was almost twenty, I left my home town to take up a job in London. At first the break with Jean was almost more than I could bear. But separation, and the host of new activities in the great City, dulled the edge of pain, as separations and new activities will, and in time I found myself remembering Jean with only a faint regret.

One by one my colleagues at my new job left to get married. Marriage, I thought to myself - that is what I need to cure myself of my inversion and make myself normal like everybody else. That was it - the simple solution to my problem. A husband would soon help me to overcome my natural feelings for my own sex.

I joined several social clubs and organizations, and met several men. Some were interesting to talk to; some were obviously wolves, and others were just plain bores. I forced myself to accept dinner and theatre dates with those whom I found sympathetic. But the more I imagined myself as a wife, the more terrifying I found the prospect.

Then, one day, I met the man who is now my husband. I was immediately drawn to him - though in an intellectual kind of way more than anything else. Several years older than myself, he was good-looking as well as interesting. I found myself beginning to wonder whether, after all, my attraction to my own sex had not, perhaps, been merely a passing phase, caused by lack of congenial male company.

Roger and I were married in the spring of the following year, when I was nearly twenty-two. He did not know of my inversion and, I believe, does not know to this day. Being one of the rather old-fashioned school, he would no doubt be terribly shocked and hurt...

I have tried to be a good wife to Roger. He is not

selfish and demanding as many husbands are, and so I am spared a great deal. But, right from the beginning of my marriage, I have never been able to fulfill my wifely duties without imagining that it was the other way around, i.e., that I was the husband. I do not know whether Roger has ever guessed at the barrier between us, but if he has, he has never spoken of it.

I have tried resolutely for years at a time to put all thought of women from my mind. I have had two children, hoping that they would help to make me normal. I have as normal a love for my two children as any other mother, and they are beautiful, healthy specimens of humanity of which I am proud. But I have never been able to cure myself of being what I am - a masculine soul, with masculine desires, in a feminine body.

There have been two women - Leonora and Pamela - who have helped me in my hours of loneliness. Leonora is dead, and Pamela I do not see now for months at a time. But I feel I should warn others in my predicament that marriage is not the cure for inversion.

My marriage was an experiment that failed. Society, in its demand that I should lead a normal life, has made me an unhappy frustrated woman, looking ten years older than her real age, and has deprived my husband of the love of a real wife in every sense of the word. Perhaps, if I had not exploited his love for me by accepting his offer of marriage in a last desperate attempt to normalize myself, he might now be married to some woman who would have made him a better wife and a better mother for his children.

I do not think my children are adversely affected in any way, and for this I should be thankful. But it might so easily have been otherwise, and I had no right to risk their happiness.

I have consulted psychiatrists and doctors, and they say they can do nothing to help me. I have read one or two cases where marriage appeared to cure inversion, but not only were such cases few and far between, but I am very sceptical as to whether a genuine cure was in fact ef-

fected. I am more inclined to believe that the woman concerned deluded herself into imagining herself cured, because she wanted to be; and in almost every case the husband's masculine pride was deeply wounded, or he was shocked and hurt on what he termed "moral grounds".

I will stand by my husband as a wife until the end. I have a great affection for him, as a friend and companion. But living a lie is a terrible price to pay for entering into marriage as an experiment - even in all seriousness and with one's eyes open - and then finding that, not only has it not worked out, but that my natural feelings are, if anything, even stronger than before.

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ONE MAGAZINE—deals primarily with homosexuality from the scientific, historical and critical point of view. It contains articles, short stories, poetry, news items, book reviews and letters from readers. A popular magazine has called it 'The Voice of U. S. homosexuals.' Subscriptions $5 per year in U. S., Canada and Mexico, $6 elsewhere; all copies mailed first class sealed. Single issues 50 cents each, postpaid.

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'...a mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one.'
—*CARLYLE*

Love Muses

And I, who
Understand nothing of your love,
Dare to receive your riches;
Returning the little I can,
Eternally in your debt for the wealth
You shower upon me.

Maybe in the dear now,
Among the flowers of our love - old
Remembrance stands like a rock; I'll not let
You dash your foot against it.

Bright star of my sky!
Under whose glow I shine,
Regret not
That you left your freedom for this
Noon of a thousand wiles;
Else will I fade into darkness,
Return to nought, unlit and empty.

Let me touch you, fire and spice,
Old as mountains, young as this day;
Veil not your eyes from mine that seek,
Enter my heart as you enter all else.

- Jacqueline Lawson

VILLAGE TALE

A recounting of the facts by Gene Damon

In small towns people fasten on events, especially unusual events, and hold them in their memories longer than city people do. Perhaps that is because city people have more to occupy their minds. At any rate, everyone who lived in Cherry Falls, Colorado, hung on to the story of Malsada Ross for years and told it to anyone who stayed there for any length of time.

Cherry Falls is a small mountain town with a permanent population of 700 and a tourist or summer population of 500 more. In fall and winter most of the town is silent and boarded up and life slows to a slight crawl. Snows whirling off Pike's Peak isolate Cherry Falls from everything for weeks at a time.

I stayed there for one winter recovering from a slight brush with asthma. The climate is dry and the altitude and crisp air make mountain towns ideal for asthmatics and tuberculars. I rented a summer cottage which fortunately had a gas wall furnace. (Even July nights are often cold in Colorado.) The owners were happy to have it occupied as they only used it during the summer season and lived in Wichita, Kansas, the rest of the year.

For a few weeks I was happy to sleep long hours and walk once a day to the combination general store and post office for mail and supplies. When I felt stronger I began painting again and started venturing on longer walks in the area. The mountains are beautiful in winter. The fir trees stay green and the snow is never dirtied by the residue of city life. Even the bare shivering aspens look like silver maiden ladies denuded and sent running through the heavier pines. One December afternoon I walked up a long hill a mile or so from my cabin and, like a fool, exhilarated into overestimating my strength, completely winded myself. At the top of the hill I came upon a cabin larger than

most in the area. It was seemingly deserted and I sank down on the rear steps to rest.

A moment or two later a large rawboned woman stepped out from a shed 20 feet or so from the house and looked at me a minute as if to will me away by the intensity of her gaze. Looking back I realize it was a look of pure hatred. I got to my feet and extended my hand. "I'm David Carleton from down the hill; I walked so far I became tired and sat down to rest." She looked at me even harder and walked toward me slowly. She wore a red flannel jacket and men's pants and an odd cap on her head. The cap only partly concealed beautiful auburn hair. As she came close I could see her face was lined and weather beaten but younger than I first supposed. Probably near 40 and the product of a hard life. When she was only three or four feet away she stopped moving and glared at me. She moved her right arm and I saw she held a common wood hatchet. I jumped back startled and she spoke vehemently. "Get off my land, go on get out, you look just like him!" At this last I turned and walked hastily down the hill. About 50 feet away I turned and looked back. She was still standing in the same spot watching me and when I turned back she waved her hatchet.

I walked home of course, but I must confess I could hardly forget this unusual incident. The next day when I went to the post office I asked the postmistress who owned the large cabin a mile or so above mine. She laughed and said "Miss Malsada Ross. Have you had a run in with her?" I recounted the events of the previous day, leaving out the conversation, and she asked me to come into her little office. Once I was seated behind her small post window, next to the warm stove, she picked up her knitting and told me of the tragic love affair of Malsada Ross.

Many years before when Malsada was only 18 she and her mother, a wealthy Oklahoma widow, had moved to Cherry Falls. The girl was a young beauty, tall and slim with masses of auburn hair, blue eyes and the pale thin skin of redheads. The first winter they passed unnoticed by everyone, for as yet there was nothing too un-

usual about the mother and daughter in the large cabin, except perhaps the fact that they had stayed in the winter instead of the summer.

Being young and beautiful it was natural that Malsada would be restless in that isolated village. With coming of summer the cabins filled up and among the tourist families there was a young girl named Dee Lynn Wright. Though only about 15, the girl became good friends with the older Malsada and they spent a couple of months constantly together. In late July the two girls seemed to be always in the company of Sam, a young sawmill foreman from Cripple Creek who, during the summer, lived near Cherry Falls.

Quick to notice romance blossoming, the villagers watched the threesome closely. The gossips of the town soon had the situation in hand. They said the young Dee Lynn was a kind of messenger for the two lovers. Everyone knew how forbidding and unfriendly Malsada's mother was and so surmised she would naturally disapprove of her daughters' infatuation for a sawmill foreman. July turned into August and the three were seen together often. Some days only the two girls would be observed climbing swiftly over the rocks carrying picnic lunches and laughing together. Most of the time though there were three of them, Sam, Malsada and Dee Lynn.

One day in early September, when Dee Lynn was to leave with her family and return to school, she disappeared. A few hours later Sam's truck was found below town, wrecked and with the burned bodies of Sam and Dee Lynn in it. Dee Lynn's parents hurriedly left with her body. Sam's parents buried him and the village gradually stopped talking it all over. Malsada was treated with the respect due to a bereaved lover and when she did not appear often on the streets it was accepted.

Malsada and her mother continued to live in the cabin both winter and summer. A few years after that her mother died and Malsada stayed alone in the cabin on the hill. She became more and more removed from life and aged rapidly. As time went by she became a near recluse. Folks in Cherry Falls always felt sad that she didn't

find herself a new boy. She was such a beauty.

Finished with her story, the postmistress looked very happy. I rose, thanked her hastily and walked out into the clear mountain cold.

Somehow the story stays with me, as it does with the people of Cherry Falls, Colorado. Every once in a while, I think back to the afternoon on the hill, the tall woman, her intense hatred and odd clothing, and wonder just why she hated Sam so. Was it because he didn't love her?

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Why Am I a Lesbian?

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ON "WHY I AM A LESBIAN" WERE SELECTED FROM MANY SENT IN FOR USE AT THE DOB'S FIRST NATIONAL CONVENTION IN CONNECTION WITH THE PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE SUBJECT. A FULL REPORT ON THE ENTIRE CONVENTION WILL APPEAR IN NEXT MONTH'S LADDER. - ED.

STATEMENT #1

PERSONALLY, I DO NOT BELIEVE THERE IS ANY "CAUSE" OF LESBIAN OR HOMOSEXUAL PERSONALITIES OR CHARACTER TRAITS . . . ANY MORE THAN ONE CAN SAY THERE IS A "CAUSE" FOR THE BEHAVIOUR AND PERSONALITY OF PEOPLE ELSEWHERE ON THE EMOTIONAL SCALE - ANY SINGLE CAUSE OR IDENTIFIABLE GROUP OF CAUSES, THAT IS. I'M INCLINED TO AGREE WITH A WISE, TRAVELLED AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY SUBTLE MAN I KNOW WHO ONCE SAID IN A LECTURE: "THERE IS NO SUCH THING, BASICALLY, AS HOMOSEXUALITY . . . ONLY SEXUALITY. HOW IT WILL BE EXPRESSED IS A COMPLEX MATTER OF MORES, ACCIDENT, SOCIAL PRESSURES AND ATTITUDES, CONVENIENCE, HABIT, GLANDULAR ACTIVITY, AND MUCH MORE, DETERMINABLE AND NOT DETERMINABLE."

HE MIGHT HAVE ADDED THAT MUCH OF IT IS ALSO SEMANTIC. A YOUNG MAN OR WOMAN WHO FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, OR NO PARTICULAR REASON, HAPPENS TO BECOME AWARE OF AFFECTION OR SEXUAL DESIRE IN RELATION TO HIS OR HER OWN SEX IS IMMEDIATELY LABELED - OR SELF-LABELED - HOMO. WE ARE ALL SO HYPNOTISED BY LABELS THESE DAYS THAT IF YOU PIN ONE ON A PERSON HE STARTS ACTING AND FEELING THE STEREOTYPES OF THE LABEL. GETS STUCK. ACTUALLY, ANY ONE FORM OF SEXUAL EXPRESSION MAY CONSTITUTE REPRESSION. IN A SOCIETY THAT WAS LESS SEXUALLY PURITANICAL THAN OURS I FEEL SURE WE SHOULD FIND THE SANE PERSONS SPONTANEOUSLY INDULGING IN A FAR WIDER RANGE OF SEXUAL PLAY ALL ALONG THE POSSIBLE SCALE. IF THIS WERE POSSIBLE, AND THE GUILT REMOVED, WE'D PROBABLY HAVE FEWER NEUROTIC PERSONALITIES; ALSO FEWER RIGIDLY HETEROSEXUAL - OR HOMOSEXUAL - PERSONALITIES.

STATEMENT #2

I'M NOT SURE OF THE CAUSES - WHO IS? I'M MUCH MORE SURE THAT SOME THINGS OFTEN GIVEN AS CAUSES OF HOMOSEXUALITY ARE NOT TRUE FOR MY CASE.

1. WAS I REJECTED BY MY PARENTS OR GIVEN INADEQUATE LOVE? NO. NEITHER PARENT REJECTED ME; AND MOTHER, WHO RAISED ME (ALONG WITH GRANDPARENTS), ALMOST SMOTHERED ME WITH EXCESSIVE LOVE AND CARE.

2. DID MY FAMILY WANT A BOY, OR TRY TO RAISE ME AS ONE? NO! THEY WANTED A GIRL, AND DID EVERYTHING WITHIN THEIR POWER TO TRY TO MAKE ME "FEMININE". IT NEVER WORKED - I DISLIKED FRILLY CLOTHES, DOLLS, AND THE REST. I WANTED TO PLAY WITH ELECTRIC TRAINS (WHICH I NEVER GOT), AND CLIMB TREES (WHICH I WASN'T ALLOWED TO). THE MORE THEY TRIED TO ENFORCE THEIR PATTERN ON ME THE MORE I REBELLED AGAINST IT.

3. WAS I SHELTERED FROM CONTACT WITH BOYS DURING ADOLESCENCE, OR MADE BY PARENTS TO FEEL THAT SEX AND MARRIAGE WERE UNDESIRABLE? NO. MOTHER TRIED HER BEST TO INTEREST ME IN THESE THINGS (DESPITE HER OWN UNHAPPY MARRIAGE). IT DIDN'T TAKE.

4. WAS I SEDUCED INTO HOMOSEXUALITY BY ANOTHER LESBIAN? NO! I WISH I HAD BEEN - IT MIGHT HAVE SPARED ME MANY LONELY YEARS. MY LOVE OBJECTS WERE FOR YEARS HETEROSEXUAL WOMEN, AND FOR TOO MANY YEARS NO OVERT ACTION TOOK PLACE. WHEN OVERT ACTION DID TAKE PLACE AT LAST WITH ONE OF THEM - IN MY LATE TWENTIES - I DID THE INITIATING MYSELF, COMPLETELY "UNINITIATED" AS I WAS.

THEN, DO I THINK MY LESBIANISM IS INNATE? NO, NOT DIRECTLY. MY GUESS IS AS FOLLOWS:

FIRST, THERE WAS AN INDIRECT GENETIC INFLUENCE THROUGH MY HAVING BEEN BORN WITH A TEMPERAMENT THAT WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER WOMEN OF MY FAMILY AND CULTURE-GROUP, AND MORE LIKE THAT OF THE MEN. THIS DIDN'T MAKE ME LESBIAN, BUT DID HAVE A LOT TO DO WITH MY SELF-CONCEPTIONS. THE ATTEMPT TO THWART MY INTERESTS, LIKES AND DISLIKES ONLY INTENSIFIED MY DISSATISFACTION AT MY SEX ROLE.

SECOND, AS AN INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD, I NEVER LEARNED TO LOVE MEN.

THE CLOSEST MAN IN THE FAMILY (MY FATHER) WAS NOT HIMSELF AN OBJECT OF LOVE BY EITHER MY MOTHER, MYSELF (AS FAR AS I CAN REMEMBER), OR ANYONE ELSE IN THE FAMILY IN WHICH I GREW UP - WHICH WAS MOTHER'S FAMILY. AFTER THE FIRST FOUR YEARS, HE WAS NOT PRESENT AT ALL. THERE WAS PROBABLY A STRONG EARLY ATTACHMENT TO MOTHER, AS THE "BOOKS" SUGGEST.

BOTH THESE FACTORS PROBABLY REINFORCED EACH OTHER, AND STAMPED ME SO EARLY IN LIFE AND SO INDELIBLY THAT IT MIGHT JUST AS WELL HAVE BEEN "INNATE".

STATEMENT #3

I DO NOT SUBSCRIBE TO THE MYTH OF "THE WELL OF LONELINESS" THAT A LESBIAN IS BORN THAT WAY.

I DO SUBSCRIBE TO THE THEORY OF THE KINSEY GROUP, FOUND ON PAGE 447 OF "SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN THE HUMAN FEMALE":

"THE INHERENT PHYSIOLOGIC CAPACITY OF AN ANIMAL TO RESPOND TO ANY SUFFICIENT STIMULUS, SEEMS, THEN, THE BASIC EXPLANATION OF THE FACT THAT SOME INDIVIDUALS RESPOND TO STIMULI ORIGINATING IN OTHER INDIVIDUALS OF THEIR OWN SEX - AND IT APPEARS TO INDICATE THAT EVERY INDIVIDUAL COULD SO RESPOND IF THE OPPORTUNITY OFFERED AND ONE WERE NOT CONDITIONED AGAINST MAKING SUCH RESPONSES. THERE IS NO NEED OF HYPOTHESIZING PECULIAR HORMONAL FACTORS THAT MAKE CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS ESPECIALLY LIABLE TO ENGAGE IN HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITY, AND WE KNOW OF NO DATA WHICH PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH HORMONAL FACTORS. THERE ARE NO SUFFICIENT DATA TO SHOW THAT SPECIFIC HEREDITARY FACTORS ARE INVOLVED. THEORIES OF CHILDHOOD ATTACHMENTS TO ONE OR THE OTHER PARENT, THEORIES OF FIXATION AT SOME INFANTILE LEVEL OF SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT, INTERPRETATIONS OF HOMOSEXUALITY AS NEUROTIC OR PSYCHOPATHIC BEHAVIOR OR MORAL DEGENERACY, AND OTHER PHILOSOPHIC INTERPRETATIONS ARE NOT SUPPORTED BY SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, AND ARE CONTRARY TO THE SPECIFIC DATA ON OUR SERIES OF FEMALE AND MALE HISTORIES. THE DATA INDICATE THAT THE FACTORS LEADING TO HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR ARE (1) THE BASIC PHYSIOLOGIC CAPACITY OF EVERY MAMMAL TO RESPOND TO SUFFICIENT STIMULUS; (2) THE ACCIDENT WHICH LEADS AN INDIVIDUAL INTO HIS OR HER FIRST SEXUAL EXPERIENCE WITH A PERSON OF THE SAME SEX; (3) THE CONDITIONING EFFECTS OF SUCH EXPERIENCE; AND (4) THE INDIRECT BUT POWERFUL CONDITIONING WHICH THE OPINIONS

OF OTHER PERSONS AND THE SOCIAL CODES MAY HAVE ON AN INDIVIDUAL'S DECISION TO ACCEPT OR REJECT THIS TYPE OF SEXUAL CONTACT."

I AM A WOMAN - PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY. I HAVE THE CAPACITY TO RESPOND SEXUALLY EITHER TO A MEMBER OF MY OWN SEX OR OF THE OPPOSITE SEX. I HAVE BEEN A WIFE AND MOTHER. BUT I AM A LESBIAN BY CHOICE. THE BASIC REASON FOR THIS CHOICE I BELIEVE IS THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION OF THE PERSONALITY WITH ITS MANY-FACETED MANIFESTATIONS. ODDLY ENOUGH, AS A LESBIAN I HAVE LIFTED THE VEIL OF REPRESSION IMPOSED BY SOCIETY. AS A LESBIAN I MAY BE MYSELF.

IN DISCUSSIONS OF HOMOSEXUALITY STRESS IS ALWAYS PLACED ON THE SEXUAL ACT. SELDOM IS THERE ANY MENTION OF THE FULFILLMENT OF A LASTING LESBIAN LIAISON BASED ON LOVE, UNDERSTANDING AND COMPANIONSHIP. ANY CONSIDERATION OF LESBIANISM MUST NECESSARILY RECOGNIZE THE FACT THAT IT IS A WAY OF LIFE - THE EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPRESSION OF THE LOVE OF ONE WOMAN FOR ANOTHER.

STATEMENT #4

REASONS FOR LESBIANISM AS STATED BY MANY AUTHORITIES INCLUDE:

FEAR OF PREGNANCY OR VENEREAL DISEASE
HETEROSEXUAL TRAUMA OR DISAPPOINTMENT
SOCIETY'S HETEROSEXUAL TABOOS
SEEING PARENTS IN THE SEX ACT
SEDUCTION BY OLDER FEMALES
MASTURBATION
ENDOCRINE IMBALANCE
PENIS ENVY AND CASTRATION COMPLEX
FATHER FIXATION OR HATRED TOWARD MOTHER
MOTHER FIXATION
DEFENSE AGAINST OR FLIGHT FROM INCESTUOUS DESIRES

THESE ARE CITED AS CONDITIONING FACTORS, AND WE HAVE BEEN "CONDITIONED" TO BELIEVE THAT ANY OR ALL OF THESE FACTORS IN THE BACKGROUND OF A YOUNG WOMAN MAY LEAD HER INTO LESBIANISM. IF THIS IS TRUE, THEN I MUST ASK WHY HETEROSEXUAL WOMEN (WHOSE BACKGROUNDS ALSO HAVE INCLUDED MANY OF THE ABOVE FACTORS) DID NOT DEVELOP INTO LESBIANS? OR IS THERE PERHAPS A PREDISPOSITION TO HOMOSEXUALITY WHICH, WHEN ONE OR MORE OF THESE CONDITIONING FACTORS IS ADDED, RESULTS IN LESBIANISM?

I WOULD SUSPECT THAT A MORE LIKELY FACTOR LEADING TO LESBIANISM WOULD BE THE PROTEST AGAINST DOMINATION BY THE MALE AND THE INABILITY OF THE LESBIAN TO EMULATE THE FEMALE ROLE AS SET FORTH BY SOCIETY. THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE A WITHDRAWAL FROM THE HETEROSEXUAL MARKET-PLACE OF GLAMOUR AND EMPHASIS PLACED RATHER UPON THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FULL PERSONALITY.

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CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS - IMPRESSIONS

(Continued from page 6)

its say was pretty obviously biased on the side of the bureau it represents. Private opinion had its say and it was obviously on the side of reason and civil rights. We ended up on a masterful coup on the part of the program committee ...a tableau that got us all to laughing again.

An elegant dinner after a pleasurable cocktail hour brought us to the point where we should be going to sleep to prepare for the day ahead. But our dinner speaker's humor and his wisdom provided more conversation and perhaps we were not all too prepared for the day ahead.

It took us nearly all of Sunday to understand our semantic differences. But we are proud to note that we did overcome them and place organization above personal preferences; NY conceded to SF; SF conceded to LA; LA conceded to SF and NY....it took strong leadership to control concession and make us agree on just how much to love each other...DOB won...as a whole...as an entity...as an organization.

San Francisco took over after that. It was a bit fog draped in the morning in its usual demure manner, but the brisk wind and the official "no-nonsense" climate led us on to a wonderful "gay bar" evening followed by a continental brunch on Monday and a "gay line" tour...a "slow-down" when people got to know each other...a time of friendliness, never-to-be-forgotten hospitality and warmth from the San Francisco DOBs. It left us with a re-dedication to the principles as told us by our retiring president...it was proof-positive of how those principles work...proof of their merit and worth.

Those of us who attended will never forget the excitement, the living proof of our worth. It was a timely shot in the arm when so much is adverse in so many areas.

Thank you, DOB; ABC; Vice Squad, professional folk...thank you all for letting us see you and letting you see us.

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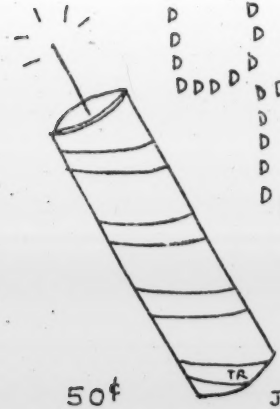

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